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USSR: Performance Enhancement. (U)

(C/WN/NF) Chemical substances have been used to improve the mental and physical functions of Soviet troops, according to the former chief of the Pharmacology Laboratory, Moscow Institute of Physical Culture.

(C/WN/NF) The institute, a training facility for Olympic athletes, is one of the leading Soviet research institutes studying methods to enhance performance. Chemical substances derived from certain plant materials, cited as the most commonly used by Soviet military personnel and Olympic athletes, were said to increase tolerance to high and low temperatures as well as oxygen levels. Details were revealed on the testing methods used to determine the effectiveness of each substance, and two key Soviet reference books were cited that provide the technical details on these substances and others used in the USSR.

COMMENT: (C/WN/NF) According to the US Army Foreign Science and Technology Center (FSTC), this confirmation of the Soviet military's use of chemical substances for performance enhancement is of major importance. It adds credence to other reports of Soviet military interest in the use of both conventional drugs and novel substances to improve troop efficiency. Moreover, the two references cited should provide previously unavailable information on the composition and active components of performance enhancers, allowing Western analysts to assess their efficacy. Nonetheless, until more thorough scientific investigations have determined the effects of these performance enhancers on mental and physical functions, such Soviet claims remain important. The fact that Soviet military personnel believe in the effects of the substances is significant because of the psychological advantage it could offer in certain physically or mentally stressful situations. (DECL OADR)

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